MINUTES

OF THE

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

HELD WITH THE

JACKSON CHURCH,

IN THE TOWN OF JACKSON, LOUISIANA.

On the 6th, 7th and 8th days of Oct.,

1838.

LIBERTY,

PRINTED AT THE PLANTER OFFICE.

1838.

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OF THE

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

SATURDAY, OCT. 6th, 1838.

1st. The introductory sermon was delivered according to previous appointment, by brother Z. Reeves, at 11 o'clock. A. M., from Titus, Chapter 2, Verse xiv, "Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all inequity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

2. After a short intermission, the Delegates assembled in the Presbyterian Meeting-House, and business was opened with singing and prayer, by brother Felder.

3. Letters were received and read from twenty-one Churches, the names of the Delegates enrolled, and the state of the Churches minuted.

4. Brother C. Felder was chosen Moderator, and brother H. D. F. Roberts, Clerk.

5. After reading the articles of faith, rules of decorum, &c. adopted by this body; letters were received from three newly constituted churches, by the hands of their delegates, petitioning admittance into the Association, viz: Mt. Pleasant, in Pike Co.; Liberty, in the Town of Liberty, Amite county, Mi.; and Baton Rouge, in the Town of Baton Rouge, La.; which Churches were admitted, and their Delegates received the right hand of fellowship by the Moderator. Also, a letter from Mt. Ebal Church, petitioning admittance, but in consequence of the absence of her Delegates, the letter, when read, was laid on the table, and the Moderator requested to instruct the Church to send on her letter and Delegates to the next meeting of this body, as the presence of her Delegates is essentially necessary to her admission; also, to furnish her with twenty copies of the minutes of this meeting.

6. Brethren, S. M. Brian, R. Quin, and G. P. Claughton, were appointed a Committee to arrange the Preaching during the session: who reported as follows, viz: that brethren D. Collins, Z. Reeves, and H. D. F. Roberts, preach on Lord's day, in the order of their names; worship to commence at 10 o'clk, AM.

7. Letters of correspondence were received from sister Associations, as follows, to wit: from the Pearl River, by the hands of her messenger, Elder W. Fortenberg; from the Union, by Elder J. Bailey, with a package of her minutes; from the Leaf River, by Elder G. Davis, and T. C. Hunt; also, a bundle of minutes. These brethren were received and invited to seats.

8. The following brethren were appointed to write letters of correspondence, viz: H. D. F. Roberts, to the Pearl River; D. Lea, to the Union; and G. P. Claughton, to the Leaf River Associations.

9. The following brethren were appointed Messengers of correspondence, viz: Z. Reeves, S. Coker, and H. Wall, to the Pearl River; J. Young, Z. Reeves, and C. Felder, to the Leaf River, and H. D. F. Roberts, T. M. Bond, and W. B. Wall, to the Union Associations.

10. Appointed a committee of arrangement and revision, consisting of brethren, J. Young, Z. Reeves, and T. M. Bond, with the Moderator and Clerk.

11. Adjourned to meet at 9 o'clock, Monday morning, concluding prayer by brother Young.

On Lord's day the congregation was large and attentive, and the exercises solemn and impressive.

MONDAY, OCT. 8th, 1838.

The Association met pursuant to adjournment, prayer by brother Reeves.

12. The Committee to arrange the preaching reported that brethren, Fortenberg, Bailey, Bond and Davis, preach on Monday, in the order of their names.

13. The Committee of arrangement reported, which report was received.

14. The Circular prepared by brother Roberts, was called [illegible], read, and unanimously adopted.

15. The following query, from Mt. Nebo Church, was taken up, "what course should a Church pursue towards a brother, who lives immediately in her bounds, and has a permanent residence, who holds a letter of dismission from a distant Church, and refuses to offer the same for admittance—is it good order in said Church to allow such brother church privileges." Answer. The Association regards each Church as an independent body, and being acquainted with the circumstances of the case, should exercise her own judgment in all such cases, and that the Church near which such member resides, should inform the Church from which such member took his letter, of the course pursued by him.

16. Resolved, That brethren J. M. Bryan and G. P. Claughton, be a Financial Committee, to receive the contributions from the Churches, and together with the Treasurer, to audit the Treasurer's account.

17. A petition was presented by Elder E. Courtney, complaining of corrupt and unjust conduct towards him, by Hepzibah and Ebenezar churches, the petition was rejected as unconstitutional, and the following resolution adopted, viz: Resolved, That this Association disclaims all power to interfere with the government of the churches, but for the good of the cause of Christ. She recommends Hepzibah and Ebenezar churches to call a committee of brethren in this Association, and that Elder Courtney choose an equal number of brethren in the Association, and that the persons chosen by the churches, and said Courtney, compose an advisory council, all of whom are to be disinterested and unprejudiced either way, and that said council thus composed shall investigate the difficulties, and recommend said parties to settle them, in a Gospel and satisfactory way, if possible.

18. Resolved, That brother E. Courtney be requested to return a letter writted by the Rev. Mr. Ronaldson, designed for the circular letter of this Association, for the year 1829, if in his possession.

19. Resolved, That this body unanimously tenders her thanks to the Presbyterian church, in Jackson, for her kind and christian courtesy, in affording us the privilege of sitting in her meeting-house, to transact the business of this meeting.

20. Resolved, That the thanks of this Association, are due to the citizens of Jackson, and vicinity, for the kind and hospitable manner in which they have entertained the Delegates and others, who have attended the meeting.

21. Resolved, That brother Bond write the next circular letter.

22. Resolved, That brother Young deliver the introductory sermon at the next meeting of this body; and that brother Bond be his alternate.

23. Resolved, That the next meeting of this body be held with the New Providence Church, Amite county, Mi., commencing on Saturday, preceding the 1st Lord's day in Oct., 1839.

24. Appointed brother Felder to superintend the printing and distribution of 1,000 copies of these minutes, and that he draw on the Treasurer for funds to defray the expenses of printing; and also, that he receive $15 for his services.

25. The Financial Committee made the following report, which was received, viz:

In the Treasurer's hands - -	$ 48 75	
Contributions from the Churches, -	127 00	
		175 75
Paid to Messengers of Correspondence,	47 00	
Paid for printing these minutes, -	75 00	
Paid C. Felder as superintendent, -	15 00	
		137 00
Remaining in the hands of the Treasurer, -		$ 38 75

Prayer by brother Smith, and the Association adjourned.

CHARLES FELDER,
Moderator.

H. D. F. Roberts, Clerk.

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TABLE OF THE CHURCHES COMPRISING THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, FOR 1838.

Names of ordained ministers in small caps—absent delegates marked thus *

NAMES OF CHURCHES.	NAMES OF DELEGATES	Baptised,	Rec'd. by letter,	Restored,	Dismissed,	Excluded,	Dead,	Total Number,	No. of Ministers.	Time of meeting,	Post Office,	Contributions,
N.Providence,	T. R. Cheatham, James Jenkins,	24		1	23		3	69		4th	Liberty,	$ 7 00
Ebenezar,	Wm. Johns, Willie Jackson,	9			2		3	65		1st	Rosehill,	11 50
East Fork,	Chas. Fylder, Allen Spurlock,	2			8	1	1	59	1	2nd	Liberty,	5 00
Zion Hill,	Moses Seale, Right Seale,	6	3		17	3	2	74		1st	Liberty,	6 00
Shiloh,	Not represented,											
Jerusalem,	Wm. B. Wall, Howell Wall,	7	2		5	3		112	2	3d	Liberty,	5 00
Percy's Creek,	No delegation,			3			1	8				2 00
Hepzibah,	H.D.F. Roberts, B. Taylor,* Jno. White,* J. Walker,*	3	5	6	4		1	203	1	2d	Clinton,	10 00
Mt. Nebo,	Peter Bankston; Thos. Zachary,	9	2	2	7			58		4th	Marbryville,	4 00
Mars Hill,	Jesse Young, Wilson Clark,	1	1		5			39	2	4th	Smitdale	5 00
Mt. Zion,	Not represented,											
Hopewell,	MartinBuckles,*		3			2		21		1st	meadville	5 00
Gallilee,	John Straughan, G. P. Claughton,	2	2			2	3	34		3d	Lebanon,	5 00
Salem,	Richard Quin, Lemuel Wall,	14	5		12	5		67		3d	Holmesville,	7 00
Pinckneyville,	Isaac Daws, N. Bowren,*	4	2				3	19			F.Adams	2 50
Friendship,	T. Wallace, Alfred Reeves,	1	1	1	17	1		35	1	3d	Holmesville,	5 00
Beulah,	Robt. R. Sibley, P. Hays,	5	2		12		2	57		1st	Sibila,	5 00
Ramah,	Fred. White, Saml. Coward,	1			1	4	2	36		3d	Smitdale	5 00
Bethel,	Not represented,											
Jackson,	S. M. Brian, Nathaniel Brian,	2	1			1	1	55		2d	Jackson, La.	5 00
Clinton,	Jas. B. Smith, James Neesom,				2	1		44	2	1st	Clinton, La.	5 00
Hebron,	Thos. M. Bond, J. S. Felps,		2			1	2	16	1	1st	Beachhill	3 00
Bethlehem,	Alex. Courtney, Daniel Morgan,	8	9				1	43		3d	Mt. Pleasant,	5 00
Mt Enon,	Jas. Strickland, M. R. Watson,	1						16		2d	Greensburg,	3 00
Mt. Pleasant,	Z. Reeves, R. Albritton,	2	13					36	1	4th	Holmesville,	5 00
Liberty,	David Lea, N. Chalfant,		10					38		3d	Liberty,	5 00
Baton Rouge,	Phil. Thomas, Wm. Thomas,		11					23	1	2d	B.Rouge,	5 00
From the Mt. Ebal Church,												3 00

CIRCULAR LETTER.

There is probably no subject of more importance, on which we could offer our opinions and advice to the churches at this time, than that which concerns the internal regulation and Gospel order, ordained by the great head of the Church: this is truly and emphatically a day of trial. We have enjoyed an enlivening and flowery Spring, a warm and seasonable Summer, and an Autumn abundantly prolific of a seven-fold harvest; but these delightful seasons have been succeeded by a cold and cheerless winter. Our desolate hearts have been left to mourn the absence,& pray the return of the lovely chief of all our joys. The world has assumed malignant arms; errorists and false teachers have sprung up to prevent the right way of the King, the Lord of hosts; while division and discord are seen rearing their heads among ourselves. Nothing can restore to our churches the full enjoyment of peace, but the strict exercise of that discipline which is prescribed to us in the word of God.

Of all the fruitful fountains of discord in the churches, evil speaking is the most common, and far the most prolific. Now, altho' the Law Giver in Israel has said, "speak evil of no man;" which is as much designed for a rule to regulate his people, as when he says, "Thou shalt not murder," or "Thou shalt not steal;" yet where is the church or individual on earth, that so much as even understands this precept in the full latitude of its meaning, or at least, that fully practices it. It is not the same thing with lying and slander. A man may most rigidly and perseveringly adhere to truth, and yet be constantly found in this evil and sinful practice; it consists in relating the faults and frailties of an absent person. It matters not whether you have seen the man drunk, or heard him swear and blaspheme, if you relate this to a third person, in the absence of the guilty one, you have violated a positive law of Christ, and been guilty yourself of backbiting your neighbor. If this be done in a low voice, and as if in private confidence, it is termed whispering. But whatever may be the manner in which, or the circumstances under which it is done, in substance it is one and the same thing. We are trampling under foot the plain direction of our Lord, whenever we speak of the faults of another who is not present to answer for himself. Now, as clearly as this evil speaking is prohibited by our Great Law Giver, it is practiced more universally, than any other sin of the whole catalogue. It is not (to use the language of Seneca,) "a distemper in one, and a sore that runs on another, but a plague that infects our whole race." It is too frequently the case, that in promiscuous conversations of any considerable length, the characters of the absent

are introduced, and their faults brought forth to view, and their persons censured and condemned. This prevalent commonness of committing the sin of which we are speaking, makes it necessary that we should be perpetually on our guard against it. If we would act with the fear of God before our eyes, and have a conscience void of offence towards men, more circumspection is required in regard to the more prevailing sins. When almost every person of our acquaintance gives a loose rein to some particular vice, or sinful practice, it seems as if the whole world had conspired against us to prevent our obedience to our Lord and Savior. But if the danger we are in, of giving way to this evil, only arose from the daily observance of the example of others, we would have less to apprehend. But our greatest enemy lurks, as in all other cases, within our own borooms. There is scarcely one sinful passion, or unsanctified affection of our whole nature, that may not, in one way or other be gratified by the commission of this sin. Our pride, our anger, our hatred or malice, our resentment, &c., are all concerned to hurry us on. Besides, we often mistake our own motives, and are taken by surprise. We disguise to ourselves noble and worthy motives for our conduct, and only speak of the sins of our neighbors, out of holy indignation, trampling beneath our feet the holy commandment of God, out of holy feelings of zeal for his commandments; this is sinning that grace may abound —or committing evil out of our hatred of evil! We effectually serve the devil through a supposed zeal for God, and commit sin that we may punish the sinner.

"Easily," says Dr. Blair, "and from the smallest chinks, the bitter waters of strife are let loose;" but who can predict their probable consequences? Who can tell how great a matter a little fire kindleth? When the poisonous streams have commenced flowing, they seldom fail to gather strength from a hundred contributory rills,—One does wrong, another speaks of it, the fame of the transaction spreads abroad, and increases as it spreads. The offender becomes the offended and injured party—resentment is kindled in his breast —his friends participate in his resentment, and thus the peace and harmony of a church is destroyed by the wicked practice which we are now censuring. But is there no remedy for this evil? Cannot a strict adherence to any system of rules preserve us from this deadly foe? Is there no balm in Gilead and no physician there? Our Lord has marked out a plain way for our feet, in which, if we closely walk, it will be impossible for us to err in this respect. In the eighteenth chapter of St. Mathew, verses 15, 16 and 17, he has laid down the general rule in relation to offences, and the manner of dealing with offenders: "It must needs be that offences come, but woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh!" The Apostle Paul also testifies that "he that will live Godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." The rule given us by the Savior, in Matthew, particularly refers to cases occurring among members of the church. Our blessed Lord, moreover, says, "if thy foot or right hand or eye offend thee, cut it off or pluck it out and cast it from thee" If the dearest friend and nearest relative on earth violates the rules of the holy Scriptures, cut him off and count him as a heathen man and publican.

But how it may be asked, shall we avoid giving offences ourselves, or being offended at others; our savior lays down the rule: "if thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between him and thee alone; if he will hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.—And if he will not hear them, tell it to the church; but if he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as a heathen man and a publican.

The first step pointed out by the Savior, is, "if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone." Where the thing is practicable, this rule is to be literally observed and obeyed. If you have undeniable demonstration that your brother has sinned, do not wait for another, but go immediately to him and tell him his fault; let no one else know any thing of your purpose, or of what you do. Be also particularly careful of the manner and spirit in which you discharge this duty. Remember that it is alone in the spirit of meekness, that you should attempt his restoration. Do not visit thy brother with malice in thy heart, and show a resentful spirit against him, at the moment thou art striving to win him over to unfeigned repentance for his sin, and to the humble spirit of the Lord Jesus; nor be harsh or censorious in thy manner, remembering who has said, "they that win souls are wise." How many difficulties which have involved members and churches in trouble, and prevented the free course of the glorious Gospel of the Lord and Savior, might have been hapily removed at once, by a timely observence of the sacred canon of Christ. Go in the spirit of prayer, considering who hath made thee to differ, and knowing, and feeling confidently assured that if any good is done, it is the Lord that doeth it. Pray that he may enlighten thy mind, influence thy heart, and direct thy tongue to use the proper language that may take with thy brother, and that he may bless thy efforts to that end. If you feel thus interested in the salvation of your brother, and your heart be filled with love to his soul; you will avoid all assumingness, arrogance or pride, in your address. You will be equally on your guard against treating your brother with contempt, as if you had a right to command his submission. Be careful to avoid all appearance of anger, and though you use great plainness of speech, yet let there be no reproach, no railing accusation, no token of any warmth but that of love; and yet this sweetness need not hinder your speaking in the most sincere and solemn manner. The nearer your language is conformed to the very language of Scripture, the more effect it is likely to have, and the better for you to use.

Observe well, that this step is not only recommended or commanded by the Lord Jesus; but it is the first step to be invariably taken. No alternative is allowed, no choice of any thing else; this is the way, walk ye in it. It is true, he enjoins if needs be, to take two or three other steps, but they are to be taken successively after this step. There can be no other way, either before or beside this, that will answer. Whatever we may do according to the various commands of our Lord and his Apostles, with offenders of different ranks, as pointed out in the epistles, yet this first step must be taken and must precede every other.

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...could hold in no longer! No wonder you groaned under a bur...
..., you had knowledge of your brother's doing wrong, you felt offen...
...d; at the wrong, and yet kept it concealed within your own bosom; you have been laboring under the guilt of sin; you have violated a positive command, and your conscience must have been seared not to feel the burden. But how have you managed to get clear of the burden? Your mind has been laden with sin of omission, and you have proceeded to ease it by one of commission! May the Lord save us from all such deliverances! When you feel that your mind is burdendened with such an injurious secret, know that God is greater than your conscience, and will condemn you, unless you take the proper and only step for scriptural relief Go to your brother between him and thee alone. And yet there is one solitary case, in which, with the utmost propriety, you may tell the faults of one to a third person, viz: when you know a man intends injuring another, and his safety consists wholly in being put on his guard, by the information you can give. You are then loudly called on by every principle of honor and justice, to the person intended to be injured, to let him know it. Be certain, however, in making such discoveries, that you go no further than well known facts will bear you out. Let not suspicion of another's designs lead you to make communications that may possibly embroil a whole neighborhood. But in all other situations, to tattle about the failures and faults of our brethren or neighbors, tends to the direct overthrow of harmony and good order, and is highly sinful in the sight of God; and must, moreover, destroy the fellowship of brethren, and bring misery and ruin on the church.—Wo! to that man, who, regardless of God's holy law, thus hates his brother, and murders him in secret, with an evil speaking tongue!—Our blessed Lord goes on to instruct his disciples in what manner they are to proceed against incorrigible offenders. After taking the first step towards reclaiming your brother from his error, and after experiencing the fruitless effects of your love, your second step will be, to "take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established." The persons selected on such an occasion should be such as possess a loving disposition. As in the first instance, use no harshness of manners, no rough language, no proud or arrogant demeanor; but in meekness and gentleness, strive to show him wherein his wrong consists; the danger of persevering in such a course of conduct, and the necessity of retracting from it, that you may walk together in "the unity of the spirit, and the bond of peace." Let the persons assisting in such labors of love, reason with the offender. Let them enforce the friendly observations of the wounded brother, bringing clearly to view the extent of such injuries as affect the peace of churches. Let them clearly state the Scriptural prohibitions to the line of behavior he has taken, and point out the necessity of a change. They will then be better able to judge in what manner to proceed, and "in the mouths of two or three witnesses every word will be established."

Now, as in the first step, so in the second one, we are not left to judge for ourselves, what course we shall take. The Lord has enjoined it. This course must be pursued, and pursued in successive order, as here stated, or sin lieth at the door. We are not permitted to take witnesses with us at first, nor after we have reported it to the church; but after taking the first step, we are then, and not till then, to take the second; nor at our peril, to neglect either.

We have known some cases in which a brother would manifest a morbid sensibility, by becoming wounded, when no grounds existed; where no intentional offence was committed, and then take this second step first. Under such circumstances the church is under no obligation to hear; nor indeed ought brethren under any circumstances whatever, to act. It is as flagrant a violation of the command as could be offered, and shows a maliguant spirit in the brother that attempts it. Members of churches are still but men, and possess those passions and sympathies by which the world is led astray. Various jealousies will be engendered in their intercourse, and some will strive to put down others from mere worldly policy. Such members are not obeying the voice of our Shepherd. They have incured the guilt of murder by hating their brother, and assassin like, striving to take advantage of him, of which he has no suspicion. Be assured, brethren, that when any one takes this second, and especially the third step, first, that some motive, aside from the Gospel has influenced him. When you are called upon in such cases, we think your best way will be, sharply to rebuke the evil-doer, and if possible, shew him the error of his way. But, at least, clear your own skirts, by leaving him to act alone.

Until after taking these two steps in their scriptural order, we are permitted by no means to relate the offence to any one. But having done all we are able to do, agreeably to Christ's directions, to save our brother, we are then at liberty to mention all the particulars of the case to those who are now to assist in this great act of brotherly love. We are to relate it to the church.

We have no thought that our Savior intended by the word church, in this place, the whole body of believers. Nor can we think that all who are united in one assembly or association, are meant. There would arise no good from the delay requisite to apprise so many of the thing. The word (Ecclesia.) which is here and elsewhere rendered; church, is, by some, translated "a congregation of believers." The word is compounded of two original Greek words, which together signify "called out of." Whenever a number of believers in Jesus Christ have united together, in covenant bonds, for the purpose of serving God, according to New Testament principles they are generally understood to compose a church. This body claiming to be part of the Mystic Body, of which Christ is the head, have an undoubted right to carry her own keys, and transact all her own business, without regard to the councils of other bodies. Every member in fellowship in such a body has a right, from Christ himself, to take the first step we have mentioned—to claim the assistance of one or two more of the same body or company to which he and they belong, to take the second, and after doing so, then to relate it to the church, viz: to that

body who have covenanted to walk together in loving obedien
the Scriptures, to which he and the offender both belong, and
both responsible.

We here differ in opinion with some eminent commentators on t
passage. They think it necessary that this last communication be
made to the elder or elders of the church, who have that particular
church under their care. We cannot think our Savior ever meant
the servants of the churches, or the servant of any particular church,
by the word "church." He surely meant the members, altogether,
at any ordinary conference. After you have taken the right steps,
in their proper order, then "tell it to the church," in conference. As
the brethren who are called together as witnesses, have no right to
act with the wounded brother, till he has labored himself alone, so
the church may not take the case up and act on it till every word is
established by the mouths of two or three witnesses. Probably this
last step will retrieve a straying brother, after the other two have
been tried and failed. But if he will not hear the church, "let him
be to thee as a heathen man and a publican." Withdraw thyself from
incorrigible offenders. If they were once dear as the apple of thy
eye, and their light shone with great brightness, they have now de-
parted from the way of holiness, and polluted their garments in the
mire of this world. But let not anger, or malice, or revenge be seen
to have any influence in your proceedings. Nay, after you have re-
jected a member, and he has become to you as a heathen and publi-
can, still treat him as such. Offer to him the terms of the Gospel,
as you would to any other, and invite him by repentance to return to
the Shepherd and Bishop of souls. To take up an enmity against a
man because he was once of us, but has now gone out from among
us, is as sinful as it is unreasonable and unscriptural. Therefore,
after doing your duty to keep up the peace and holiness of the church,
maintain your christian charity to all, even the most disobedient and
rebellious.

Wherever these rules of discipline, formed by the Savior for the
government of the church, are strictly observed, peace, happiness
and prosperity, with every accompanying blessing, will inevitably re-
side. But we might ask, where is that happy people under the sun?
Where is the community existing on earth, in which that wicked
member, the tongue does not stir up confusion and mischief! Yes,
alas! for the world! Men do not confine themselves to tattling truths.
They proceed from simply relating the faults of their neighbors, to
lying and slandering. The most eminent for piety become the larg-
est marks for their envenomed arrows. They form a judgment of
their motives, unfavorable to sincerity and truth, and to sustain
themselves, begin to find fault with their character and actions, con-
verting their brightest virtues into blemishes, adding some material
part from their own inventive imagination. One falsehood requires
a thousand others to support it. Having entered the crooked course,
they pursue on from lie to lie. Others, as their interests or prejudi-
ces lead, join in; and thus, hand in hand, they go, till confidence is
destroyed, peace is broken, and uproar and confusion succeed in their
places.

There is no period more likely to produce such mischief making characters, than the decline of great revivals. During the heavenly overflow of a refreshing season, many will profess to know Christ from motives of fashion; or at least, on superficial examination of the grounds of their hope. But when persecution arises for the words sake, they turn their backs on religion; and first begin with railing accusations against their more steadfast brethren. Thus the bitter waters of strife are let loose upon the church. That which a little while ago was like the garden of God, is beginning to appear overrun with thorns and briars. At such a time, the oldest and most experienced soldiers of the cross, long accustomed to endure hardness, are driven before the storm. No one can tell whence so many sorrows rise. Each one feels the declension of christian exercises in his own bosom, and would gladly think it owing to some other's faults, than his own, that it is so. This produces a favorable state of feeling to give credit to the malicious. The world, in the mean time, stands by, laughing at the short-lived transports of christian hope.—The indolent drones mock, deride and persecute. Divisions and vexatious contentions separate brother from brother, and friend from friend. This is, in some degree, the melancholy picture of the present time. To remedy this, we have the word of our heavenly Redeemer. Let us draw nigh unto the sacred testimony, as to a light that shineth in a dark place. Let us steadily and tenaciously persevere in dealing with each other as commanded by our Savior, let no one exempt case be allowed by us. Where a brother has suffered his feelings to be wounded by another, and has made his complaint to a third, let the third person take him under dealing immediately; and the churches act with promptness, though with mildness. In a short time we shall reap the fruits of our obedience. As a vineyard or orchard, when well pruned in the spring, brings forth abundantly better crops in the autumn; so shall our churches, purged from the unholy leaven, recover their former healthy, peaceful condition, and prosper in holiness, righteousness and truth.

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